

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y FOR PARA FIVE AND SIX

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FOLLOWING MSG RCVD FROM CHIANG MAI 28 AUG 78, REPEATED
FOR YOUR ACTION/INFO:

QUOTE
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE, CHIANG MAI 326

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SNAR, TH
SUBJECT: ONCB SPONSORED SEMINAR ON NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION IN CHIANG
MAI (AUGUST 20-24)

SUMMARY: THE ONCB SPONSORED A REGIONAL SEMINAR ON DRUG
SUPPRESSION IN THE NORTH OF THAILAND FROM AUGUST 20-24.
PARTICIPANTS IN THE SEMINAR INCLUDED 179 CIVILIAN POLICE AND
MILITARY OFFICIALS WORKING IN NORTHERN THAILAND PLUS TWENTY
FOREIGN DRUG ENFORCEMENT REPRESENTATIVES. BOTH THE SPEECHES
AND THE WORKING SESSIONS EMPHASIZED THE SERIOUS THREAT
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NARCOTICS REPRESENTS TO THAI SOCIETY. WHILE THE PARTICIPANTS
SPENT A GREAT DEAL OF TIME DISCUSSING GENERAL PROBLEMS
RELATED TO NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION, THE GREATEST BENEFIT OF THE
SEMINAR WAS PROBABLY PSYCHOLOGICAL BY DEMONSTRATING THE CON-
TINUED EMPHASIS OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT ON NARCOTICS SUP-
PRESSION AND THE VITALITY OF THE ONCB UNDER ITS NEW LEADER-
SHIP. END SUMMARY.

1. THE OFFICE OF THE NARCOTICS CONTROL BOARD (ONCB) SPONSORED A REGIONAL SEMINAR ON DRUG SUPPRESSION IN THE NORTH OF THAILAND FROM AUGUST 20-24. THIS WAS THE SECOND SUCH SEMINAR SPONSORED BY THE ONCB. THE FIRST SEMINAR WAS HELD SEVERAL WEEKS AGO IN THE SOUTH, AND SIMILAR SEMINARS ARE PLANNED FOR BOTH THE NORTHEAST AND THE EASTERN PART OF THAILAND. PARTICIPANTS IN THE CHIANG MAI SEMINAR INCLUDED 179 CIVILIAN, POLICE, AND MILITARY OFFICIALS WORKING IN THE NORTH WHOSE RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE DRUG SUPPRESSION. TWENTY FOREIGN REPRESENTATIVES ALSO PARTICIPATED, INCLUDING REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE DEA OFFICES IN BANGKOK AND CHIANG MAI, THE OTHER FOREIGN NARCOTICS ATTACHES, A LARGE REPRESENTATION FROM THE HONG KONG CUSTOMS AND POLICE SERVICES, THE BANGKOK INTERPOL REPRESENTATIVE, AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE U.N. AGENCIES.

2. THE ONCB ANNOUNCED THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE SEMINAR WAS TO ENSURE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORTS IN THE REGION, AND THAT THE OBJECTIVES OF THE SEMINAR WERE TO IMPROVE THE SKILL AND EXPERTISE OF NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS; IDENTIFY OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS AND MEANS OF SOLVING SUCH PROBLEMS; ESTABLISH BETTER RELATIONSHIPS AND COOPERATION AMONG THE DIFFERENT AGENCIES AND OFFICIALS ENGAGED IN DRUG SUPPRESSION; AND TO ENCOURAGE CLOSE COOPERATION ON ANTI-NARCOTICS MATTERS AMONG THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FOREIGN COUNTRIES INTERESTED IN THE PROBLEM.

3. IN ADDITION TO THE STATED OBJECTIVES OF THE SEMINAR, ONCB OFFICIALS ORGANIZING THE PROGRAM OBVIOUSLY HOPED THE SEMINAR WOULD EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT IS GIVING TO ANTI-NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION ACTIVITIES; WOULD DEMONSTRATE TO THE FOREIGN COMMUNITY THE THAI GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORTS; AND WOULD DEMONSTRATE THE INCREASINGLY ACTIVIST ROLE THAT ONCB IS TAKING UNDER ITS NEW LEADERSHIP.

4. THE CONFERENCE WAS WELL ORGANIZED AND RUN. THERE WAS ACTIVE AND INTERESTED PARTICIPATION BY THAI OFFICIALS. THE ORGANIZERS ALSO PREPARED A PROGRAM FOR THE FOREIGN VISITORS WHICH INCLUDED VISITS TO NORTHERN THAILAND CROP SUBSTITUTION PROJECTS, AND OVERFLIGHT OF THE OPIUM GROWING AREAS, AND LUNCH IN THE BORDER TOWN OF MAE SAI. SEVERAL HIGH RANKING OFFICIALS OF THE THAI GOVERNMENT PARTICIPATED IN THE SEMINAR INCLUDING THE DUPUTY MINOSTER OF INTERIOR AND THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, BUNCHAI BUNRANGPONG, WHO HANDED OUT THE DIPLOMAS AT THE END OF THE SEMINAR. THE PRIME MINISTER AND HIS RETINUE

OF RANKING GENERALS WERE IN CHIANG MAI AND ATTENDED THE
OPENING COCKTAIL PARTY ON SUNDAY AUGUST 23.

5. THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERIOR, GENERAL PREM
TINASULANONDA, IN A HARD-HITTING OPENING SPEECH LISTED
NARCOTICS AS ONE OF THE FOUR MAJOR THREATS TO THAI
SOCIETY; THE OTHER THREATS BEING CORRUPTION, THE
DESTRUCTION OF FORESTS, AND THE INSURGENCY. THROUGHOUT
THE SEMINAR THE EMPHASIS WAS ON THE DANGERS THAT
NARCOTICS PRESENTS TO THAI SOCIETY RATHER THAN CONCERNS
ABOUT THAILAND'S INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION BECAUSE OF
THE FLOW OF NARCOTICS THROUGH THE COUNTRY. ITEMS DIS-
CUSSED DURING THE COURSE OF THE SEMINAR INCLUDED THE
PROBLEMS OF THE SUPPLY OF CHEMICALS TO FEED THE BORDER
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REFINERIES, SMUGGLING OPERATIONS ACROSS THE BORDER,
ADDICTS AMONG THE THAI POPULATION, THE NEED FOR BETTER
INTERNATIONAL INFORMATION EXCHANGE, PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS
IN THE ROLE OF INTERPOL, AND THE ROLE THAT THE THAI
CIVIL SERVANT MUST PLAY IN MEETING THE THREAT OF
NARCOTICS. A GREAT DEAL WAS SAID ABOUT CORRUPTION AND
HOW CORRUPTION IN NARCOTICS COULD BE EQUATED WITH AID AND ABITTING
AN ENEMY OF THE COUNTRY.

6. WHILE THE ANNOUNCED PURPOSE OF THE SEMINAR WAS TO
INCREASE KNOWLEDGE AMONG GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS IN THE
FIELD OF NARCOTIC SUPPRESSION, WE SUSPECT THE BENEFITS
WERE MORE PSYCHOLOGICAL THAN PRACTICAL. DURING THE
COURSE OF THE THREE DAY CONFERENCE, A LARGE NUMBER OF
WORKING-LEVEL THAI OFFICIALS WERE CONTINUALLY REMINDED
THAT THE CURRENT THAI GOVERNMENT PLACES A GREAT DEAL
OF EMPHASIS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION
AND THIS POINT WAS DRIVEN HOME BY THE PRESENCE OF
HIGH-RANKING THAI OFFICIALS. IN OBSERVING
THE CONFERENCE AND DISCUSSING THE PROGRAM WITH A
VARIETY OF PARTICIPANTS AND ORGANIZERS, I WAS
IMPRESSED WITH THE NEW VITALITY THAT THE ONCB IS
DEMONSTRATING UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF GENERAL PAO
SARASIN.

TANNER UNQUOTE ARBAWOTZ

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